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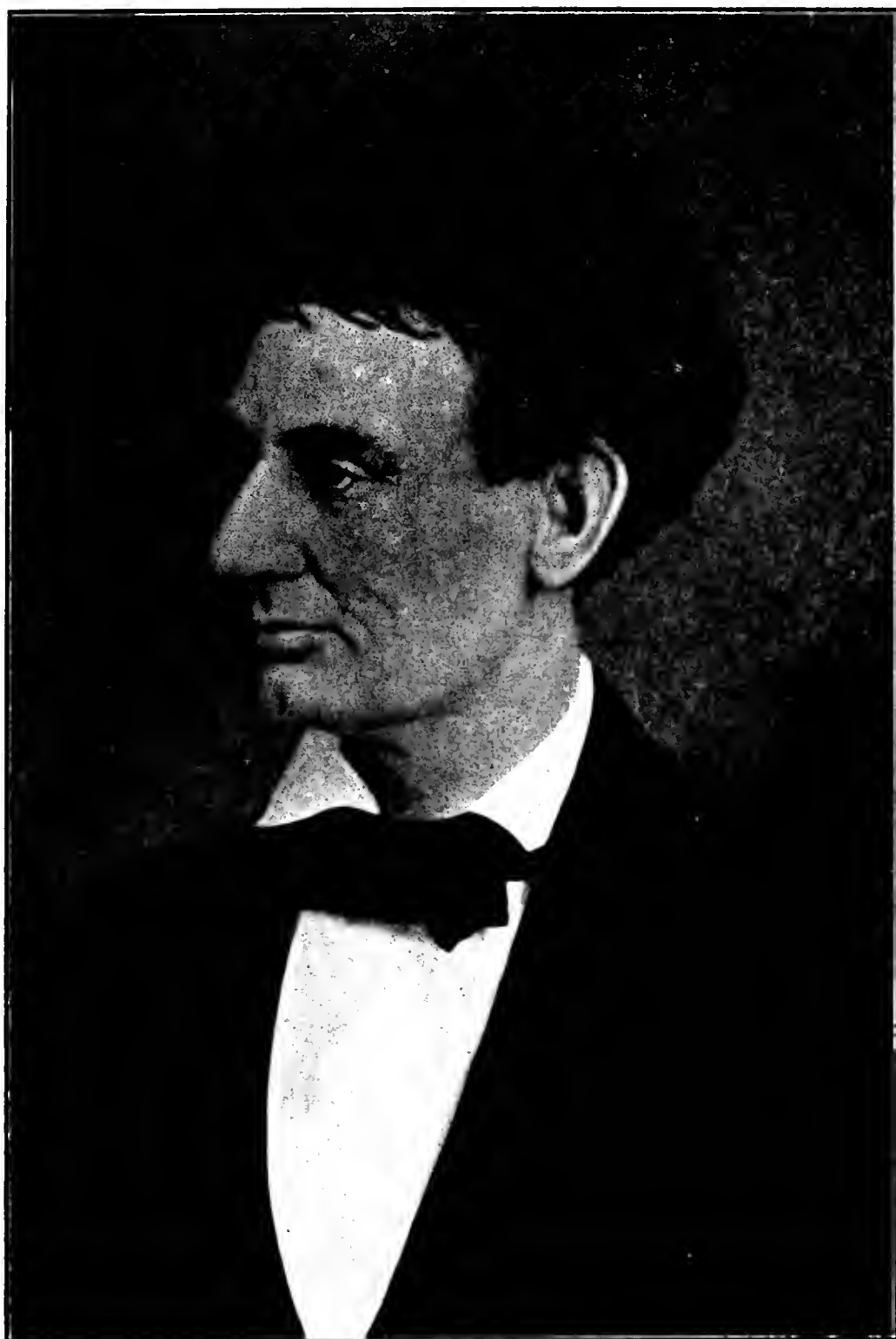


**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**









FROM AN AMBROTYPE TAKEN AT  
PRINCETON, ILLINOIS, JULY 4TH 1856  
BY WILLIAM MASTERS

# ✓ ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THREE ADDRESSES BY  
MELANCTHON WOOLSEY STRYKER ✓  
PRESIDENT OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Printed for the Author  
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# I

BREATHCART, so lowly born, so rudely bred,  
Decreed the Captain of those lurid years,  
Loneling of Time, with suffocating tears  
Laid tenderly among the mightiest dead,  
What trust, what love, thy towering spirit led  
Thro dark, tremendous days! What sanity  
Girded thy sadness, LEICOLN! Humanity  
Thy mystic kin, whose life with longing bled.  
Out of the West, to weld the South and North  
In the war-blast, simple, so unaware  
Of thy rare dignity, pitiful and wise,  
Hearing the undertones that summoned forth  
Great hosts to die, when all was done, to bear  
Thy red libation to the sacrifice!

# Abraham Lincoln

*FIRST SAID TO THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB OF  
BROOKLYN, FEBRUARY 12, 1895.*

---



DOUBT not, all you true gentlemen, that it is time for an American Book of Days. This land we love is old enough and rich enough in men and achievements to have a rubricated record all its own.

The dates which punctuate its great events, its births and burials, its successive and interwoven crises of national evolution, its high tides and low, its "storms and tempests greater than almanacs can report," its feasts and fasts, its anguish and its anthems—these dates make a calendar with all its weeks illuminated and emphatic. More than we often pause to remember are we rich in history, not merely of a continental, but of a world-wide significance. Our life is of inter-centurial and planetary import. Each month is a volume, with its peculiar, illustrious and garlanded events. Wonder at all that our American Aprils have witnessed, recall the annals of our great Julys, and then, you who love your country and treasure in your hearts her excellences of character and action, with also her sins, her repentances, her renewed probations, turn your thoughts to February, least in length of the twelve, but with two natal days, starset and resplendent, and own that the month with such a 22d and such a 12th, is the chief and brightest in all the round of the zodiac!

We are met, under the compulsions of a common reverence, to keep high festival, upon one of Columbia's cradle-nights, nay, to recall the gift, thro us, of one of the royal heirs of a world's admiration and wistful affec-

tion. Ours indeed he is: but not ours only. The pantheon of Time claims him as one of Humanity's types and leaders. The "razure of oblivion" shall never touch his story, nor devotion to its high import become obsolete.

Amid the awed and woful group that watched that wild April night sink to the ashen dawn, Stanton was one, and when all was ended, it was his voice that spake out in solemn and befitting prophecy, "Now he belongs to the ages." The ages claim Lincoln. Thenceforward no one city, commonwealth or clime could appropriate him. History admits no transient and local monopoly to intrude between her and her elect dead. They are her own. She is their Rizpah and their Rachel.

"Never before that startled morning"—wrote Lowell, (at the conclusion of that essay whose strong and chiseled paragraphs go with the masculine emotion of the Commemoration Ode to make up his complete and unsurpassed tribute)—"Never before that startled morning did such multitudes of men shed tears for one they had never seen. Never was funeral panegyric so eloquent as the silent look of sympathy which strangers exchanged when they met on that day. Their common manhood had lost a kinsman."

That day is one of the strange indelible memories of my boyhood. How long and how little seems this interval of thirty years! But as each year has gone, with what certainty of just conviction, it has added one more tier to the masonry whereon is founded that ascendant and invulnerable fame. How such a story effaces the poor pride of language! How unequal are iridescent word-bubbles to catch and carry the tremulous half-lights and the true splendors of that luminiferous character! How must the soul stammer and sob that yields to the whole appeal of a spirit so great, so genuine, so gentle. Little indeed will the world heed, nor long re-



member, what any lips can now say of him,—enough that it will never forget what he did for us and for all men.

Who, then, shall presume to think that he has well summarized or at all completely analyzed the contents of such a life? I lay my withering blossoms with those of his innumerable lovers, knowing that were their stems of gold and their petals of ruby, these would rust and dim long before the tooth of time had touched his immortal renown. I deprecate your heed to me, even while I entreat it. Think round, past, over, beyond, my frail and slender utterances. Let your reasoned gratitude and heartfelt admiration weave their own tributes in words that no man can utter. Let the “mystic chords” that he knew so well to touch into music, sound their master’s requiem. *Sursum Corda!* He was God’s gracious gift to a tormented and distracted time. He took Who gave. He Who gave and took, guards the inaccessible honor of a supreme and solitary soul, who, “having served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.”

Bare-browed and wet-eyed, we stand in this our day under a firmament whose four-and-forty stars, unnamed and indistinguishable by any claim of severalty, make one unrivalled and unquenchable constellation, and highly resolve that Abraham Lincoln shall not have lived in vain nor vainly died!

And we declare our faith that the theme of that lost leader’s greatness will still be new, curious, alluring, inspiring, until America shall have failed of her memory, until patriotism is senile, until self-sacrifice is no longer cogent, until popular government is moribund and democracy is numbered with the lost arts.

In the city of Chicago, at the entrance of the beautiful park that bears his name, there is placed commandingly a statue of our greatest President.

Doubtless nearly all of you are familiar with its noble and unassuming pose. But what has always most impressed my imagination is that which stands just behind the exalted figure of the man—that empty chair! Never was vacant throne so suggestive and so full. Well might those words have been sculptured there which Lincoln uttered so early as 1858—“Tho I now sink out of view, I believe I have made some marks which will tell for the cause of liberty long after I am gone.” All of the memorials of such a nature and the reminiscences of such a life are significant and inestimably precious. We are to be glad that the narrative by his partner, Herndon, both establishes so much intimate fact and dispels so much possible myth. It was an unusual witticism of Longfellow’s that auto-biography is what biography ought to be! In counterpart language, this close friend more than any other, or than all others, sets forth the real personality without gloss or apology. We want the negative to be untouched in a single line, that we may get the truest impression of one who sat, quite behind what any strange or casual eye could see, within a most sensitive reticence. Frank as Lincoln was, unaustere, accessible—there was an inwardness and reserve behind whose further curtains few penetrated and they but seldom. It is in his public words that we receive the deepest revelations of the strong and longing soul, so tender and so taciturn. His phenomenal gift of narrative was the alleviation not the assertion of his inmost self. Talk was his refuge from a proud and stately sorrow,—a most pathetic and melancholy reverie. He was born under the sign of Aquarius. His life was clouded and rainy. Some of the sweetest sources of happiness were frozen to him. His yearning spirit turned upon itself and for the most part sealed its records. Upon that Cromwellian face (for tho it was more than Cromwell’s, it was

Cromwellian, wart and all) there were the seams of early responsibility and long restraint, and in all the humor of his smile there lurked the twitch of pain.

We all know the story of his early days—Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois—the bare poverty, the indomitable struggle to learn, the country law office with its rough clinic of human beings—its pathology of affairs, his small book lore and yet his keen literary susceptibility, that apparent listlessness in which he thought, and thought, and grew. All around, as we see it, what a wretched school, and yet what a schooling God gave him there! Soft raiment never sat well upon that home-spun king. Here, providentially, and out of the unlikeliest origins, was six feet and four inches of man. Little thripenny minds once sneered at his suburbanity and thought him outlandish, but splitting fencing or riving sophistry, steering a flatboat or a government, at the cabin hearth or at the capital of the Republic, in county law or commander of armies and fleets—that man, uncouth of limb and courtly of heart, is always and only ABRAHAM LINCOLN! There was but one. There will be no other. The mould is broken. “The case of that huge spirit is now cold.”

Where did he get that aquiline wit, that shrewd and sensitive judgment, that pronged logic, that felicity of instance, that sure touch of nature, that vital and saline style? For he was cunning in the niceties of language and coined wisdom into colloquial aphorism. What tough sense, what absence of vamping, what conclusive directness, what sagacious transparency! “Honest Old Abe”—what a thirty-third degree of popular confidence was that! Which of us does not remember his wish that other generals “would get some whisky of the same kind”—his ballot-winning remark about “swapping horses while crossing a stream”—his appealing fun over

“Uncle Sam’s web feet.” Thackeray, once for all, defined a snob as “one who admires mean things meanly.” A great man is one who seeks great things in a great way. So was Lincoln great. He “never sold the truth to serve the hour.”

With marvelous development he rose to each new demand and met it adequately, and there never was a day when he was not more of a man than the day before. Vast tact and absolute rectitude went together. He was a student of occasion, but never in the shifty and selfish sense an opportunist. He discerned concrete issues and was no doctrinaire. He cared for results and was no respecter of persons. He used what he could get and so got what he could use, knowing how to pursue that high expediency whose duty it is both to forego and to transcend mere legalities. Astute in deliberation and biding his time, he never surrendered to others one ounce of his own responsibility and he proved his wisdom in taking all the advice he could get and using what he thought best.

“Gentle, plain, just and resolute,” he surprised those who had thought to control him, by his revelations of aptitude and of decision. Lowell wrote: “While dealing with unheard of complications at home, he must soothe a hostile neutrality abroad, waiting only a pretext to become war.” What tasks were these and with what untried tools! His temper equalled the emergency. He wielded war measures without flinching, yet always as an elect citizen, and so loved both the Union and the Constitution, that in their preservation he saved the one from those who would have destroyed it, and the other from those who would have defended it to death by quibbles. He saw that the Union was the very life of the Constitution—that academic distinctions are trivial in a struggle for existence—he could not consent to the cult

of a disembodied spirit, nor protect the constitution of a corpse! His elastic tact was also stubborn. He refused to embroil us with angry England in the Trent affair, yet made her better sense halt when thro the lips of Minister Adams he said: "It is unnecessary for me to remind your lordship that this means war!" Even to John Bull what "Hosea Bigelow" called "the fencin' stuff," seemed likely to come a little too high!

Lincoln's self-restraint was not that of "a being without parts and passions," but of one controlling his forces for use. Of slavery he said in '55: "I bite my lips and keep quiet": but, a while later, stirred to the depths by the seizure of a free black boy at New Orleans, he said—and I take his indignation not as an oath but as a vow—"By God, gentlemen, I'll make the ground of this country too hot for the feet of slaves!" It was in that resolve that he entered upon the great debate in Illinois. He loved peace: but as a "just and lasting peace." "I hope it will come soon, and come to stay, and so come as to be worth the keeping for all future time." But his integrity never blenched. His utterances always 'meant business.' In the teeth of the counsels of timid friends he crystalized the truth in 1858. "This Union cannot endure, half slave and half free. A house divided against itself cannot stand." Withal, his rugged patience was as cautious, strategic, diplomatic, as it was persistent and courageous. Patience in him became a genius, a purpose that censors could neither hurry nor hinder.

"He knew to bide his time;  
 And can his fame abide  
 Still patient, in his simple faith sublime,  
 Till the wise years decide.  
 Great captains with their guns and drums.  
 Disturb our judgments for the hour:  
 But at last silence comes.  
 These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,

Our children shall behold his fame ;  
The kindly, earnest, brave, far-seeing man,  
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame.  
New birth of our new soil, the first American."

This many-sided, yet directly simple President, this greatest Democrat of history, ennobled the people by trusting them and trusting himself to them, as they ennobled themselves by responding to that trust. "When he speaks," (wrote Lowell in 1864, in that monumental essay which I have before quoted) "it seems as if the people were listening to their own thinking aloud." His alert ear heard always that little click which precedes the striking of the clock. "It is most proper (he said at Buffalo) that I should wait and see the developments and get all the light possible, so that when I do speak authoritatively I may be as near right as possible." "Why should there not be (so went his first inaugural) a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people?" At "this great tribunal" he pleaded. "This is essentially a peoples' contest," ran his first message.

He knew how to interpret public opinion, and it answered him with a mighty and unbetrayed confidence. He both roused it to self-recognition and registered its vast resolve. He knew how to speak for the Nation, without obtruding himself. He knew how to speak to the nation as the voice of its own conscience. He had no conceit of vocabulary. The, to me, most moving lyric of those days utters that response of the nation, as the deed vindicated the song:

"Six hundred thousand loyal men  
And true have gone before,  
And we're coming, Father Abraham,  
Three hundred thousand more!"

Verily he had prophesied well, in his good-bye to the citizens of Indianapolis: "Of the people when they rise in mass in behalf of the union and liberties of their coun-

try, truly it may be said, 'The gates of Hell shall not prevail against them.'"

This soul to whose noble abstraction and dedicated purpose the small gossip of the world was naught, drank deep the cup of vicarious pain. He paid daily the penalty of heroic love. In his sympathy he became a sacrifice. He "bore his cross" for the soldiers in the field and the mothers in their homes. And all the while he was "sustained and cheered by an unfaltering trust," a "faith that right makes might," "that in some way men can not see all will be well in the end." He deserves a place with "the elders who obtained a good report thro faith," and yet who only foresaw Canaan and the Christ to be. He came, like Moses, no further than Pisgah. But he believed. He believed in himself, in America, in man, in God, and in that faith he climbed the steps of the altar.

He was at once a poet and a prophet; he had that intuition which is the common differential of both—that insight which is foresight. For hear him, when leaving Springfield for "a duty greater than has devolved upon any man since Washington"—"Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with me and aid me, I must fail: but if the same omniscient and almighty Arm that directed and protected him shall guide and support me, I shall not fail—I shall succeed." By that token so was it unto him. I read and reread that pathetic invocation, I trace his growing trust in suprememercy, I witness him "lead the whole nation thro paths of repentance and submission to the Divine will," I hear him urge "humble penitence for national perverseness and disobedience," and as our representative and spokesman say, "If every drop of blood drawn by the lash thro years of unrequited toil shall be repaid by one drawn by the bullet, still must we say our God is righteous." I see him not shrinking

nor counting the chances of his own life. And blessing God for such a heart-born testimony as that one more,—“Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow,”—I challenge those who question his intrinsic truth toward the Highest.

Whatever were his speculative doubts, born of wholly inadequate religious teaching and hatched by experiences that embitter many—justice, mercy, humility, reverence, love, steadfast submission to God’s will and way, these are the elements of the piety that Heaven accepts. He learned to pray and to intercede, and thro a temperate life he pitied the widow and the fatherless and kept himself unspotted from the world. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this.” Who loves what Christ loves, loves Christ. This high faith availed him in all affairs. He was no vagarist. Yet seeing and seizing the possible, he strove toward the stars. He was the most practical of idealists, believing that what should be can be, and that what should be and can be shall be!

*Per aspera ad astra*—thro stripes to stars, for that stands our dear flag. It is the seal of the national wedlock between each state and the Union, and that which God hath joined together no man shall put asunder!

“Hard, heavy, knotty, gnarly, backed with wrath,” says Herndon, were Lincoln’s words as in ’56 he joined the party pledged to resist the extension of slavery.

Lincoln felt the unconscious destiny of America and helped, in the forefront, to abate the taunt of the world that our eagle was but a vulture. In that stumbling and disastrous night his soul was one that believed in the morning. Only a base and bastard mind can forget that he was a part of the great price wherewith we ob-



tained this freedom. The lost cause of caste was a triumphant failure. It freed the white man most.

“So find we profit by losing of our prayers.”

“The struggle of today (said Lincoln’s message of December, 1861) is for a vast future also.” Thankfully I quote from that true poet,—Maurice Thompson:

“I love the South. I fought for her  
From Lookout Mountain to the sea:  
But from my lips thanksgivings broke,  
When that black idol, breeding drouth  
And dearth of human sympathy  
Thro all our sweet and sensuous South,  
Was, with its chains and human yoke,  
Blown hell-ward from the cannon’s mouth,  
While Freedom cheered behind the smoke.”

Gentlemen, recall, you who can, that Good Friday, all those April days of 1865, when God “shewed us hard things and made us to drink of the wine of astonishment,”—when victory was turned to mourning!

Horror, incredulity, anguish—one wild, convulsed sob, “It can not, must not, shall not be!” And then thereeling certainty that it was, and an orphaned nation calling, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!” All the lowly of the Earth mourned and in that mourning took hope for the universal cause of the people and so the great conclave of human hearts canonized him by acclaim. Party passions withered in that august homage. Critics and detractors stood abashed or repentant. In the knowledge of what it had lost the land first realized what it had had.

So that catafalque moved thro its slow procession of sixteen hundred miles. Dirges, minute guns, flambeaux, choirs, bells, and everywhere black misery and piteous tears—at last, Springfield. The faithful tomb unveiled its bosom to take to its trust this new treasure and the troubled soul was at peace. But already that soul had

begun to keep its endless Easter. The hand that penned the proclamation has touched the hand of that lost child whom the father's heart had never ceased to mourn. Those steps have come out of tribulation to find that One who "saved others and himself could not save." An offering? Yes—his own tired and thankful soul! A gift? Yes—not a sceptre, but a pen; not a crown, but a broken manacle. "*Well done, good and*"—the gates are closed!

Once more I cite him. "We cannot escape history. The fiery trial thro which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation." To honor, noble one! In contrast, how poor are the powers and ambition of mere conquerors! Where is the Bonaparte by the side of that tall spirit. Lincoln has one solitary peer in history—William of Orange, like himself, a martyr to his patriotism. The first administration of Washington gives parallel in the state of the army, the treasury and public opinion: but these were not war. The sorrow for Hamilton is an analog. I think of these three as the first three Americans.

If Lincoln had not the charm of Hamilton and the urbane dignity of Washington, he had a sagacity rivaling the one, a patience rivaling the other, and a tenacity that surpassed them both. But I would not compare them; I would blend them all. They have passed under Time's impartial and dispassionate recognition. The place of Lincoln is secure in the judgment of mankind. Words can add nothing now to that monolithic fame. Death hath no more dominion over him. He was the top man of the century that is hurrying to its end. Let the ascription of the French people, so significant in its allusion to the lower empire, stand as our ultimate tribute—"He saved the Republic without veiling the statue of Liberty."

II



# Abraham Lincoln

*SAID TO THE REPUBLICAN CLUB OF  
NEW YORK CITY, FEBRUARY 12, 1897.*

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UR President of the night, and my fellow-Republicans, (without distinction as to present condition of servitude); tho it is somewhat out of my line, you will permit me to remark that clubs are trumps. I suppose I should add that of them all this club is the ace. Certainly in the last twelvemonth a remarkable hand has been played for all it was worth. The superiority of the American lead to "bumble puppy" has been demonstrated, and the absurd finesse from a two-spot to a jack—from the platform to the candidate—having failed, the best hand won by tremendous odds, with what Charles Lamb delighted in,—“A clean hearth, a good fire and the rigors of the game.” Brighter days are at the door. Empiricism is passing. A trusty leader, with his party about him, will carry us over the glad threshold of the new Century.

But to my errand,—the holiday and the man. Thanks, under God, to him whose singular greatness is the token of all these your greetings, we have a Republic undivided and indivisible! Your name and history is national; so be your sympathies and your endeavors. He whom we are met to celebrate was a Republican, and was not ashamed to say so. Confusion is revealed in the sterility of the hybrid. Be it ours to wear the name of Republican as he defined and ennobled it, who held party as an instrument, politics as his opportunity, patriotism his motive, and the people's ultimate truth his goal.

Upon this radiant and solemn anniversary you are

assembled to relight the torch of the 'Wide-awake' and the flambeau of mourning, gazing thro all upon yonder untorn emblem,—the guerdon of our awful travail when freedom was reborn and the guidon of our forward marching. Beautiful flag! He loved it and maintained it. It is dearer for his true sake! In the crises and exactions of the unrevealed years may the great price of which he was part never be forgotten; may its folds never be dimmed by dishonor, nor its glory abated by the recreancy of those nursed under its shelter! Having beamed over broken manacles, may it never blush over broken promises or timid counsels! From fort and fleet, from school and Capitol and home, let it float unsullied—the morning-bloom of freedom and equal justice to all who hope because they remember. And if by foes without, or direr foes within, its true meaning shall ever be menaced, may it be protected and lifted higher yet by hands that shall take heart of grace in recalling that knight of the axe and master of the pen who made ours, whatever else it shall be, Lincoln's land.

Eighty-and-eight years ago his birthday. Long ere this, even with no foreclosure, he would have died. How swift are the years! Thirty-six backward and last night, the fair skies weeping, he was saying his good-by to Springfield neighbors. Thirty-six years tomorrow, and in the House of Representatives, while hate howled its impotence, the electoral vote was officially declared. Let not that time of astonishment and trembling be named without recalling how Dix and Holt and Stanton stood fast, while Floyd and Thompson and the rest were rotting like maggots from a torch! And with all the true in deathless fame, name that last of the better Whigs—that rugged Virginian—Winfield Scott, (do not forget that also Thomas and Farragut were of the 'Old Dominion'!) whose loyalty in those first frightening days alone

safeguarded the all-important seat of government, and who, when Wigfall asked whether "If for an overt act he would dare arrest a Senator of the United States," replied: "No; I would blow him to Hell!" Such determination sent the familiar spirits of secession to their own place. There was "a dread Scott" decision worth having.

Far more, gentlemen, than we are wont to realize, does the dissemination of their whole biographies spread the influence and perpetuate the motives of our lamented and departed leaders. Thro all the first half of this century the popular knowledge of Washington thus diffused was an incalculable, however unrecognized, force in educating that loyal sentiment lying back of the tremendous resolution which the Sixties registered and fulfilled. Speaking of the hold had upon him by the story of the Jersey campaign, Lincoln himself said; "I remember thinking that these men must have been encouraged by something uncommon to suffer so willingly."

The lately issued volume, by Ida Tarbell, that has gathered so much that is new and nearly all that can be authentic concerning Lincoln's early life merits our fullest attention. With each item and shred of such a story every American heart should be familiar. But to my thinking the numerous and various portraitures, many of them not before printed, are of pre-eminent importance. These, even alone, in a sequence which clearly exhibits the development of his character, contain the supreme biography. The last seven years of his life are in those likenesses. There is the story of the great war. His brow changes from 1861 to 1864 as if under the pressure of thrice as many years. And under the shadow and palimpsest of strife is—peace! His representative responsibility for a people's trial and doubt and victory is told there, and

“There was a manhood in his look  
That murder could not kill.”

What a personality, and what a story! How acutely, how exhaustlessly fascinating is its pathos! My poor sickle can only glean. At first, as we think of his heredity and environment, we wonder how such a man could have issued from such circumstances: but reflecting, we discern that those antecedents were not accidental, but providential, and that the God who intended the result furnished the disciplines.

Sprung from the loins of the people to be their leader and commander, he was one by whom it shall always mean more to be an American and a man! God was the tutor of this great commoner, and, as he so often said, “God knows what is best.” One of that God’s surprises—his career—is a standing rebuke of all diletante idleness and freezes the sneer upon the thin lips of caste. He inherited his father’s frame and his mother’s heart as his sole fortune. They were enough. They gave him, as his pre-eminent traits, that courage and that sympathy which were the outfit of a peerless manhood.

Humanly speaking, he was never brought up—he came up, by hardest struggle, thro dismal lack and stark necessity. But up he came and up he stands forever, distinctly the typical American nobleman. Let those who would hold the stirrup of alien underlings and play the flunkey to titular rank, however rank its ignobility, summon their scant brains to consider this indigenous soul and to learn that no cradle of Plantagenet or Hanover, of Bourbon, Hapsburg or Brandenburg, ever rocked so much of immortal renown.

Opportunity for the lowliest to become the loftiest,—this is the lesson of that frontier hovel. Spite of all contrary opinion, true beauty and integrity of manhood is not incompatible either with harsh beginnings or with



the strenuous exactions of affairs. His education, as Lincoln said, was "picked up under the pressure of necessity." Of school attendance one year was all he had. But always a learner, he came at last in practical wisdom to be a scholar and to the last day of his life he grew in mental and moral stature. How must that example of painful struggle toward self-improvement shame the most of us! For who of us has made his best of those advantages for which this backwoodsman pined in vain?

His books were chiefly these:—Burns, "The Pilgrim's Progress," Shakespeare, Weem's "Life of Washington," the English Bible. But these he knew. Of the Bible he memorized much. Its style and actual phrase were at his large command, and its supreme ideas, as well as its elastic idiom, gave power to many of his most critical utterances. This apparatus of education, gentlemen, if small, was not meagre—allegory, humor, moral imagination, dramatic feeling, patriotic history, folk-lore, devotion,—these were in those few but potent books. He mastered his material and one language sufficed him. No one can ponder the substance, the solidity, the tact, the appeal of that majestic second inaugural and not feel that here was a master of arpeggios. Who, to take an earlier instance, can consider the acumen and precision of his emendation of Seward's State despatch over the matter of the Trent affair and not confess Lincoln as "cunning with the pen" as he was astute in diplomacy?

Carlyle wrote, "All true greatness is melancholy." There ran thro this introspective soul a deep vein of sentiment. The sad-faced child became a brooding and silently yearning man. He saw visions and dreamed dreams. His adroit humor is pathetic as we think how truly he could have said, after Desdemona,

"I am not merry; but I do beguile  
The thing I am by seeming otherwise."

There was a minor note which gave the people's heart a near access to him which few had as individuals; for most reverently we can say that he, too, was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Much misery had taught him mercy, and there is a most plaintive longing in that admonition to his little Tad,—“My boy, I would have the whole human race your friends and mine.” Lincoln's love of that poem, “Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?” has re-written it, and not for “Trilby,” but for his sake, who loved it dearly, will we still sing “Ben Bolt.” For he, too, had his “sweet Alice”—long dead.

Farmhand, flatboatman, store-clerk, land surveyor (as was Washington), militiaman, county lawyer, then all at once the heart and the will of a mighty party—nay, of a people; then the object lesson of the world; then the lament of a generation; then—immortal! The path fitted the goal. For his sake, if for no other, the Potomac and the Ohio and the Sangamon are the “three principal rivers” of America. What a time was that for which he came to his more than kingdom! Curtis said: “The world sneered as it listened, and laughed at a Republic founded upon liberty and afraid to speak the word at home. Our feet had slipped to the very brink of the pit and were scorched with fire.” The Missouri Compromise had been repealed. The “Dred Scott” decision had seemed to make the Ship of State a slave-ship! The President's place, as one has sternly said, was vacant, while James Buchanan drew the salary!

The Chicago Convention of 1860 did not realize all it had done in placing its banner in Lincoln's hand: but which one of all his apparent peers could so have borne it? Neither he nor the wisest could then have comprehended his mission or its grandeur. But he went on his way “with firmness to do the right as God gave him to

see the right," and the common people, who once had flocked to listen to his court pleas, still flocked and still listened to their leader.

With what broad sagacity he composed the first Cabinet and with what surprise they discovered the calm self-reliance and determination of their master! From the outset his remarkable estimating of men, his keen perception of aptitude, his dignified independence, his finality of cautious decision, stood revealed. No 'boss' whispered behind that chair which some before him had occupied, but which Lincoln abundantly filled. He redeemed the Chief Magistracy from those associations of mediocrity which a Tyler, a Polk, a Pierce had imposed upon it. Such as this unshorn Nazarite be all our Presidents to come! Seward had imagined that for himself to be Secretary of State was to be first in the Cabinet group, but he learned that even he was as a boy driving with a father's hands over his upon the reins! He recognized the situation, as later Stanton also did,—Stanton, so magnanimously appointed and whose affection was at once his own rarest honor and to his chief the most masculine tribute. Would that Chase had been as great!

Then came the solemn "So help me God!" of that fourth of March, and when, after the long suspense during the first part of that deliverance, the shout of the concourse broke out in floods, rebuking the faces of disloyal hate that glowered about, this Union knew that it had found not only an official, but a man! As over Israel's first King, "Certain sons of Belial said, 'How shall this man save us?': but he held his peace." Fast went the strange, foreboding days until there came the hour of that other Kentuckian—Robert Anderson! Then rang out the awful trumpet, and every good hand was at the halliards. Up went the flag to the watchword

of John A. Dix. This city was scarlet with it as never since—save once. The Sixth Massachusetts marched out of your Astor House to the tune of “Yankee Doodle!” After her swept your own true Seventh to the Capital. Stephen A. Douglass (and for that we forget all else) declared: “When hostile armies are marching under new and odious banners against our common country, the shortest road to peace lies in the most unanimous and stupendous preparation for war!” There leaped the live thunder and every rattling crag of Liberty answered it!

Sounded out mightily the first of those proclamations demanding the great price of freedom! Then from the lumber camps of the Androscoggin and the Escanaba; from the quarries of Vermont and New Hampshire; from the fishing-smacks of Massachusetts and the spindles of Rhode Island; from the colleges of Connecticut and New York and Ohio; from the mines of Pennsylvania and Michigan; from the counting-rooms of the cities of Sam Adams and Alexander Hamilton and Ben Franklin, and cities a hundred more; from the Adirondacks and the Alleghanies and the far Sierras; from village and prairie and lakeside and highway, there rose the answer of the free—“All up!” The old Liberty Bell that so long had slumbered found its voice again. The giant was awake!

Froude, of whom Birrel writes that his “antipathies seemed stronger than his sympathies,” declared in February, 1864, “Washington might well have hesitated to draw the sword against England could he have seen the country which he made as we see it now.” The trouble with some Britons, gentlemen, (thank God not all!) has been that they spelled the word prophets with an “f” and an “i.” There was another England—the England of the Prince Consort and of John Bright. But desperate indeed were those ransoming years. In 1860 we only

hoped that we had a country. In 1865 we knew that it was more than we had asked or thought.

While the plough rusted and the anvil was dumb, one high soul never doubted nor hesitated. Leading always, even when he seemed only to follow, he was the piston behind which the pulse of the people pushed irresistibly. Firm, conservative, moderate, sure, this great emancipator understood that there is a time to wait and a time to strike. Too swift for some, too slow for others, his vast common-sense, his judgment, that became an intuition, perceived both the right word and the right moment. Wendell Phillips, whose electricity was so much of it generated by the reaction between metal and vitriol, called Lincoln a "tortoise"; but Lowell said "he knew to bide his time."

At a New Orleans slave auction in the forties he had said of that devilish system: "If I ever get a chance to hit it, I will hit it hard." When the hour struck he crushed it forever and now there is none so low but does him reverence. Can you not see him (when at last the dream of Sophism was broken to awake and find itself empty) pressing the streets of fallen Richmond, and can you not hear that aged negro: "May the good Lord bress you, Massa Linkum"! Silently the great man raises his hat, bows and passes by. There fell the benediction of a disenthralled race and there responded the salutation of a martyr—the true *moriturus saluto* of a gladiator in the arena of Time and from under the shadows of Death.

What words, what elemental words, he spake—this unconditional man! What a repertoire are his untarnished phrases of patriotism and high devotion! His proclamations were battles, conclusions, anthems. Apt in adage and apothegm, his illustrated speech, so homely yet so constructive, was like that of Æsop and his plain

wisdom was most of all like that of Socrates. "I have talked with great men," said Lincoln, "and I do not see how they differ from others." No, not in talk, in meaning, nor in wit, so much as in the will to use these wisely. Lincoln had that true oratory which in Webster's words "does not consist in speech, but exists in the man, in the occasion and in the subject." Candor, conviction, clearness—these were his; and of him David Davis said: "All facts and principles had to run thro the crucible of an inflexible judgment."

This homely oracle, tho never clouded by abstractions, was withal a supreme idealist. He saw above the storm the white-winged Angel of Peace, and therefore with all his heart and soul he urged forward the necessary war.

Having handled every rung of the ladder, Lincoln was in all things practical. He would jettison any theory to save the fact. Intense, yet tranquil; temperate, yet unaustere; bold, but never rash; informal, but self-respecting; as modest as resolute,—his were no footlight graces.

He felt for others, and plain men trusted him by instinct. Himself walking upon hot ploughshares, he smiled and looked up! He loved the whole nation and the whole nation now loves him. In him the South that was lost its ablest friend, and the South that is has come to know it.

In the study of that lofty individuality I note first his courage. Of desponding temperament, he was the stubborn conqueror of his own fears. That critical utterance concerning "a house divided" recalls it. Manipulators shrank, time-servers winced, friends protested, but with all the fearlessness of Luther at Worms he said: "By this statement I will stand or fall." That declaration was at once a war and a peace—a peace with honor. There this Atlas bowed his back to lift a world! Detrac-

tion and jeers but steadied him. His was that forbearance which in the words of Governor Black's late inaugural, "is the highest proof of courage." When the tumid press ranted, raved, caricatured, he told the story of the man who prayed in a frightful thunder-storm, "Oh, Lord, a little more light and a little less noise!" He replied to nervous advisers in 1863: "Grant tells me that by the Fourth of July he will take Vicksburg and I believe he will do it; and he shall have the chance." It was done. In April, 1864, he put his whole confidence in that same Grant, saying to him as he went down to that awful reaping, "With a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you!" When Early, in 1864, checked but not stopped by the tremendous resistance of Lew Wallace at Monocacy, thundered at the very gates of Washington, Lincoln never doubted, but waited for the Sixth Corps and deliverance.

His courage was rooted in his sublime faith. It was exceptional, absolute, grand. It moved mountains. His central power was moral. Herndon said, "His conscience is his ruling attribute." Mr. L. E. Chittenden, in his invaluable "Reminiscences," has collected in a whole chapter Lincoln's own and many words as a devout believer in the power of the Highest. It should forever stop the mouths of gainsayers, whether infidel or theological. "Whatsoever shall appear to be God's will I will do," was his constant attitude, and than that naught can deeper go.

This is of record: Upon the third day after the "Peach Orchard" Lincoln called upon the wounded Sickles. I have had it also from Sickles' own lips. Talking of the great slaughter, with streaming eyes the President told of his own assurance of the result, of his praying in his own locked room as never before: "I told God that I had done all that I could, and that now the result was

in His hands; that if the country was to be saved it was because He so willed it. The burden rolled off my shoulders, my intense anxiety was relieved, and in its place came a great trustfulness; and that was why I did not doubt the result at Gettysburg." Others for themselves may say what they like of that; I say that it is the demonstration of one anointed—of the Nation's High Priest.

Diplomat, strategist, master of speech, monarch of occasions, humane, believing, often did he weep; but never did he flinch or falter; and, when he was not, it was with "abundant entrance" that he went to find his Anne Rutledge and his Lord! "Oh, piteous end!" "Fallen, cold and dead" the Captain lies. That face, with all its rugged honesty, its homely beauty, its lines of leadership in suffering, its august peace, is gone! The long columns that tread Pennsylvania avenue, with the smoke of the great sacrifice behind them, will not salute the chief.

But those other squadrons invisible that crowd the air—the loyal legions of those who have passed from the camp-fire to the Hosanna, from the blood-red bayonet to the wreath of amaranth, "the great cloud of witnesses"—there is he, passed over to the ranks of the immortal great. At its very meridian, snatched from our skies, that soul shines on and will shine "till the stars are cold."

The completions of such a life are not withheld—they are transfused. We are today what Lincoln helped us to become. That God he so trusted and served grant that this may be the nation Lincoln strove and died to make it. His work is not yet done. That tale, fit for the foundation of a mighty drama, worthy of a deathless epic, will never be exhausted while the last American remains who is a man. The hills sink as we leave them, the mountains rise.



Once more, if you are true Republicans, by this immutable renown are you bidden to that patriotism to which all narrower titles are but subordinate and instrumental. This people's man certifies to us that the Republic must voice the people, else it shall sink into autocracy, plutocracy, oligarchy, anarchy. So God purge us of bad men and their bad ways.

“Bring me men to match my mountains,  
 Bring me men to match my plains;  
 Men with empires in their purpose  
 And new eras in their brains;  
 Pioneers to clear thought's marshlands  
 And to cleanse old error's fen;  
 Bring me men to match my mountains—  
 Bring me men!”

We shall be just as good a party as we are determined to be. We shall have just as good leaders as we deserve—no better. We must summon to our ranks and be worthy to keep there all who love our Nation's truth, and who fear not to voice its conscience, at every hazard. We must be sworn anew not to surrender our independence to unauthorized proxies. We must hold to the most exact audit the men we select and trust—to watch, to cheer, to correct, to promote or to depose them.

O SHIP OF STATE!

“IN WHAT A FORGE AND WHAT A HEAT  
 WERE SHAPED THE ANCHORS OF THY HOPE!

\* \* \* \* \*

OUR HEARTS, OUR HOPES, OUR PRAYERS, OUR TEARS,  
 OUR FAITH, TRIUMPHANT O'ER OUR FEARS,  
 ARE ALL WITH THEE.”







# Abraham Lincoln

*SAID AT CARLISLE, PA., 1900; AT SYRACUSE, N. Y., 1903; AT NEW BRITAIN, CONN., 1903; AT YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 1904; AT PEORIA, ILL., 1908; AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICH., 1909; AT THE COOPER UNION, NEW YORK CITY, 1910; AT INDIANAPOLIS, IND., 1911; AT UTICA, N. Y., 1917; AND FOR SUBSTANCE FIVE TIMES ELSEWHERE.*

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ISTORY is the study of personal deeds. Their dramatic example is the sum of all precept. The physical world is but the scenery of those events in which great leaders find their following. We speak to-night of "a life

Given for the life of the whole live land."

The story of LINCOLN does not wear out. That sincere and intrepid personality lacks not one element of appeal to reverent gratitude, to affection, to imagination, to courage. It is the deepest and humanly most dear thing in the annals of America. We are hungry for every authentic item as to what he wrought and was. It is all so simple and attainable that it is not to be exploited, but only explained. Its mystical charm, its ripple of rare music, is no theme for mere rhapsody and boisterous rhetoric, but for quiet reason, asking apostrophe as little as the polar star! Needing no superlatives, there he stands,— "one of Plutarch's men"—serenely fair, a point for us steadfastly to steer by thro all the weathers of change.

Introducing his 'Spirit of the Laws,' Montesquieu said—"If this work meets success, I shall owe it to the grandeur and majesty of the subject." Let the sermon be hidden by its text. Let us recite fond names that

ourselves may be surer of what is really potent and that our kindled emulations may effectually perpetuate the deeds of the just. "A people is but the attempt of the many to rise to the completer life of one."

Let Abraham Lincoln rebuke those who shelter under the banyan-trees of genealogy, prizing themselves that they 'are not as other men are'; for not source and circumstance, but the *man*, rules every epic. He fellowed his time and walking with the multitude he taught the multitude to march with him. "Many kings have sat down upon the ground and one that never was thought of hath worn the crown."

Chronology is an excellent framework. About these clustering ten thousand events, one hundred major dates sketch the world. Fifty out-standing lives give us the bed-plates and rafters of our American house. Typical biographies reflect the eras their men created.

This month of February is enriched for us by the anniversaries of our two chief political ancestors—one, under God, Father of our Country, one its Preserver. Each of these thought continentally, served to the full, and lives immortal. We consider the issue of their lives that we may better imitate their faith. Copy them, repeat them, none can. There could be no 'understudy' of Washington and to pose as a resemblance of Lincoln would be only ludicrous. Each was his own largest self. But these vital men if not our models are our mentors. They impart their great motives, and by our estimate of them we are judged. "To turn events into ideas—(writes Santyana)—is the function of literature." But to turn ideas into events is the function of life! Thus we reconstruct the story into new fact and in our turn dare live.

Some persons are temperamentally incapable to understand Lincoln. Would we, who praise him dead, have appreciated him living? It is an emaciated pedantry to

“garnish the sepulchres of the prophets” and then to refuse faithfully to meet the crises of our times! If Lincoln’s spirit shall no more be our monitor, laud him as we may, we are no more his heirs! To extol the departed, yet to abandon living moral leadership, is not even a good plagiarism.

It cannot be mine to tell you any new thing of this prevailing man: but only to urge your more resolute honor of his name, thinking of him the while as a dear personal friend,—thanking God that thro Lincoln we did not break up housekeeping and that these war-welded states are a Nation at peace and not in pieces!

We must demand to know the actual Lincoln—the *whole* of him, without omission, glamour or apology, without artifice or myth,—*all* that he did and spake—his homemade fashion, his temperament, ambitions, means, obstacles,—his large laughter, his splendid wrath—we will have him *just as he was!*

Every reflection of him therefore—Hapgood, Hay, Herndon, Stoddard, Carpenter, Chittenden, and the rest; the early details of Ida Tarbell’s book, but especially those likenesses, showing the imprint of that last decade of swift, solemn years—the pain, the patience, the purpose;—we want *all* of it, undecorated and undissembled.

We want everything he said or wrote; the Douglas debate, his proclamations, his letters (and this was one he took time to pen): “I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which would attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that

our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom." (Nov. 21, 1864.) What four sentences are these!

Yes, and his blunt personalities; his jokes; his caustic logic; the law-brief memorandum—"Skin defendant"; those syllables at Gettysburg, showing how straight and far one thinks who thinks with his heart; and that tremendous "lost speech," at whose close the audience heaved toward him with one terrible roar of resolve, while out of the clouds of passion blazed the angry lightnings of war! His words are his open and electrical secret. They were deeds, campaigns. We want to know what others said to him and of him and what the world says of him now—this huge wonder!

We would see his great ears; his shambling, bony length; that big determined nose; those honest, twinkling, tender, far away, eyes; his strange, mobile and capable mouth; his strong, affectionate chin; his tousled hair! We would consider the mold of that experienced *hand*—

"The hand of Anak, sinewed strong,  
The fingers that on greatness clutch;  
Yet lo! the marks their lines along  
Of one who strove and suffered much.

Lo, as I gaze, the statured man,  
Built up from yon large hand, appears,  
A type that Nature wills to plan  
But once in all a people's years!

All is indispensable. All belongs to us. *Lincoln is ours!*

In his concentrated person was the unrecognised spirit of his time and into that he led even those who could not or would not understand him. How far he was un-



comprehended let the scurrile, but well-repented, jests of *Punch*, not only, but of *Harper's* testify;—the biting assaults of the *Tribune* and the gibes of editors a hundred more. And yet Horace Greeley lived to write, "Lincoln was the foremost *convincer* of his time."

It is well to recall that popular impatience of him and his words that answered it: "We accepted this war for an object, a worthy object, and the war will end when that object is attained. Under God, I hope it never will end until that time."

To collate the spleen vomited upon him in the electoral campaign of 1864 would show the endurance to which he was called. Alas, they knew not what they did! But hear—

"The election of Lincoln means anarchy." (Indianap. Sen. Sept. 18.)

"If Lincoln is re-elected the liberties of the people are gone forever." (Niles Rep.)

"Ought he not to receive the eternal maledictions of the white race?" (Cin. Enq. Sept. 24.)

But why quote more of a malignity and raving rivalled only by the villification once poured upon Washington! Verily, these purblind fools have also their award from history!

Before pencil of caricature and pen of travesty; before these who scolded, snubbed, patronized, lampooned, him; who deemed character by clothes and courage by declamation, his sorrowful and stately spirit stood as some tall tower stands to the wind and rain. He *expected* men to desert him: but, artist that he was in humility and in patience, he bore and waited. With his vast resolution and audacious tenacity there went also a beautiful forbearance and a sublime magnanimity, and in these he rose a royal head above his rash and vociferating censors. Judge Davis bore witness—"I

never heard Lincoln complain of anything." But that he felt it all is told in his pathetic avowal—"I have endured a great deal of ridicule without much malice, and have received a great deal of kindness not quite free from ridicule. I am used to it."

Where did he come from,—this big being, "striding out of the woods of the west"? He was no angel, he walked the ground. Born into the rough cradle of the pioneer, all about those earliest days was squalid and raw. He knew the earth and the axe. Daily bread was a problem in that dismal frontier cabin, with its door of slabs and no windows. A little lad he climbed to his bed of leaves in the loft by a row of pegs driven into the log walls. (Always he was climbing, a peg at a time!) But we need not linger at that hovel; both because it is all painfully familiar, and because every exceptionally original man is unprecedented and not explicable by environment. We only know that so it was, and that

"As the Sun breaks thro the darkest clouds  
So honor peereth in the meanest habit."

Thank God for that blessed stepmother—Sarah Bush Lincoln, whose kind heart first wakened and warmed the yearning soul of the solitary boy! She began him.

This reassuring and necessary man comforts us that in the loins of Democracy are those who shall arise to vindicate man-right, and to refute the Brahmin. Time's surprises have always been 'laid in a manger' and come out of some Nazareth. In the crucible of penury and privation Lincoln became in the noblest sense a Stoic and a Spartan. He was indigenous to plain men—the great average of the world—and knowing them he was always toward them. "So long (said he) as I have the memory of my hard-working, hard-fisted father, the people will have my heart." Thus he stood against

oligarchy and every-*archy* that oppresses manhood, in a day when the Republicans were the true democrats.

Grounded by emergency and drilled by fact he was ever stripping away the merely incidental and striving to manage the essential idea, studying reality, holding each expediency as a step to the end. With none of the advantages, nor the disadvantages, of possession, he had self-possession and split his way along. He drove each rung he climbed by. He built his own stairs. "Never schooled and yet learned" he entered life heavily conditioned and sat upon the lowest bench in the plain primary of hardship. Like Moses he was forty years in getting his education there: but he graduated with honor from the great university of America, in the class of 1865! and into a fame which himself made and none can mar. For ease and power are of inverse ratio. It is strain that knits men. He who quarrels with the ordinary as insipid or trivial will not recognize the great occasion when it comes. Limitations, which for a weaker spirit smother aspiration, often reveal fitness to survive. Where the radish strikes the stone and is stunted, the oak grapples it, surrounds it, builds it into its own foundation and anchors into a second century!

Abraham Lincoln is the standing rebuke of caste, and of the whole hyper-valuation of apparatus. Few are willing to master the tonic lessons of adversity, tho the tuition is free: but this stubborn soul endured hardness all the way. What he was he had and little else, and he is a saving offset for the emetic trifler and the litter of snobs, who care more for "Who's Who?" than for *what's what!* His grace was fairness, his dignity honesty, his etiquette no Delsartian affectation, but the good manners of the heart. Imagination, invention, initiative, were bred of his sinewy experience.

When a country store-clerk he bought of a passing emigrant an old barrel and found in it a tattered copy of Blackstone. That settled it. Now he knew what he wanted and the choice was made which bore upon the resultant man. At every date making the most of what he had, he was always becoming more and learning that ingenuity and ingenuousness which were to stand him in well at last. For the bulk and heft of education is moral. Application is more than appliances. We do not judge a workman by the novelty of his tools. A small school may issue large scholars. His fibrous, wiry and limber mind held like a vise all it gained. It was screwed in. The old spelling-school, the flat-boat, the village wrestling-match, the primitive circuit-riding,—these, and then—*Lincoln!* He felt for the hinges and handles of things, and tempered his plain tools to the hardest point. To know just what “demonstrate” meant, he resolutely mastered the six books of Euclid. Thus he taught himself to avoid the irrelevant, to get the gist and core, to find order and clarity—to become the keenest cross-examiner and best all-around jury-lawyer in Illinois. “I was afraid some of them might not know him”!—“If Douglas answers my question, it may cost me the Senatorship but it will cost him the Presidency.”—His summary of the noisy doctrine of alleged ‘Popular Sovereignty’—“If any man choose to enslave another, no third man shall be allowed to object.” So elemental was he! His mental independence did not count precedents, but weighed them. Candid and open, he was in every circle the interesting and outstanding man. At first appearance he was to many weird and disappointing: but he grew commanding as he spoke on and with every lifting sentence the souls of those who listened came toward him! His quaint and unstarched parables were never for mere mirth, but for

the end's sake, and, laying the rock of his argument with the mortar of his humor, his wit sparkled in his logic like the mica in granite! He mimicked the wrong—never the true, nor busied himself to invent random epithets!

Note, first of all, Lincoln's SYMPATHY. The valves of his heart were wide. The imagination of love aligned him with the central mass of men. The noblest enthusiasm is tender toward others, and his conviction, always 'touched with emotion', gave an uplift to human nature. One who is all *will* can do many things that catholic feeling cannot do, also he can fail of the final appeal to palpitating life. That searching minor voice had never forgotten his Ann Rutledge! Far from "the shout of the crowd," a mysterious melancholy enfolded him. Pining for 'company in this busy wilderness', his inmost life was a solitude. Miscellaneous popularity was never his and even upon his few intimates in his sombre moods he shut the door. Always there was a thorn—"a minister of Satan to buffet him." It was as if an impending eclipse held him in its advancing shadow: but that cold craft which climbs by its friends and then spurns them he did not know. He had no schoolmasterly airs nor self-exploitations.

The plaintive rhythm and elegiac note in song were dear to him. These lines, his own, show that his world was a sad one;—

"The friends I left, that parting day,  
How changed as Time has sped;  
Young childhood grown, strong manhood grey,  
And half of all are dead."

Thus he was the vicar of the longing and the lonely. He held in his soul the woes of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville and the terrific anxiety of July 1863. It was a priesthood of pain.

He delighted to pardon. A mother coming forth, with her son's life granted, cried, with streaming face—"Homely! It's a copperhead lie. He's the handsomest man I ever saw!" But for two things his mind would have buckled under the strain,—his *humor* and his chastised and ever-enlarging *faith*. Courage, of a surface sort, is easy to the sanguine, but to a temperament like his only 'the fellowship of suffering' can teach it. It was in this patience of hope that he uttered at Gettysburg the greatest poem ever said in America,—the immortal paean of democracy!

Remember next, his intuitive JUDGMENT,—dispassionate, decisive, so sane and alert it was. A politician, in the astute but not the shifty sense, his tact read the times like a raised alphabet. His prescience was moral. He trusted the rigors of eternal right and so 'endured as seeing the invisible'. He had ethical perspective. His adroitness lay in striding past all irrelevant trifles and his timeliness in listening toward every point until his hour was ready. He bent himself to advance the frontiers of *justice*. All equity was dear to him and he "opened his mouth for the dumb." By shrewd instinct he dwelt upon the greater problems, common to all men, and appealed to the ordinary mind with extraordinary sagacity. Tennyson wrote of Wellington;—

"Rich in saving common sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime":—

but greater than he who held the pinnacle of the world at Waterloo, was *here*,—filled with that salt of wisdom which Coleridge said is "common sense in an uncommon degree." The pilot house was dark, but a big-boned hand was on the wheel, and, thro the wrack, a vigilant eye, a gaunt prophetic will, and a humble, praying

heart was steering the great ship into the channels of righteousness!

For he was a PROPHEET,—a dreamer, but not a visionary. May, 1856, at Bloomington, sounding such diapasons that the throng trembled and rocked before him like a stormy sea and that the very reporters forgot to make their notes, he thundered “THOSE WHO DENY FREEDOM TO OTHERS DESERVE IT NOT FOR THEMSELVES, AND UNDER THE RULE OF A JUST GOD CANNOT LONG RETAIN IT. \* \* \* FORBEARANCE WILL STAND US IN GOOD STEAD WHEN IF EVER WE MUST MAKE AN APPEAL TO BATTLE AND TO THE GOD OF HOSTS. \* \* \* WE WILL SAY TO THE SOUTHERN DISUNIONISTS,—WE WONT GO OUT OF THIS UNION AND YOU SHA’N’T!” In April, ’64, he said—“At the end of these three years of struggle the Nation’s condition is not what either party or any man desired or expected. God alone can claim it. If God now wills the removal of a great wrong and that we of the North, as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find new cause to attest the justice and goodness of God.”

The Divine dramatist was indeed standing within the shadows and thus did Lincoln “see the curtain tremble with the breath of Him that was behind it.”

All these traits combined and culminated in his INDEPENDENCE OF CHARACTER,

“Pouring his splendid strength thro every blow,  
The conscience of him testing every stroke.”

He could distinguish good advice from bad. He hated chicanery. Others might falter and palter, but he stood like a rock, holding fast to what he was sure of and living one day at a time. With everyone his critic he abode the event and did what he could with what was furnished. He had no local partialities. He trusted Sew-

ard and Stanton, he forgave Chase, he believed in Grant, and he endured Cameron!

Sure that the Constitution was a *modus vivendi*, not a *rigor mortis*, that the Nation was paramount, he saved both and with his blood cemented this "indissoluble Union of indestructible States." Bending to no calumny, be sure he would stand now for all he stood for then.

The first time he was nominated as an availability, to become the second time an indispensability. Then Sumter and Baltimore and the North leaping to the ranks, the direful, exasperating, days of '61-'63, while we were getting ready, every north- and west-going train bearing coffins, a generation turning prematurely grey and the Nation—"plunged in heats of burning fears," shrinking appalled while God taught us integrity by the swingle of war.

With straining back and bloody sweat Lincoln brought the capstone of that Nationality which Hamilton had grounded, Marshall defended, Webster exalted. With deeper pangs he set it fast, and then, the work of the Federalists completed, this enduring and *accomplished* man gave up the ghost! That last day, amid his family, Lincoln had said—"For the first time I feel the load lightened a little." The minor symphony was moving to its cadence! The harsh harness was unfastening! The last that passed those troubled lips was to his wife. He was saying what he would wish to do when free to rest—"There is no city I desire to see so much as *Jerusalem*." That word yet upon the air, the bullet came! So fell life's curtain;—nay, *rose*! The blow that tore away that sensitive soul, smote millions of hearts: but to him it was the accolade of God!

Then the people he had wrought for knew him at last. His story is theirs. They never will forget. The plain folk of all the world know him and they challenge Amer-



ica to be "dedicated to that cause which he so nobly advanced." His great democratic cause cannot be a lost cause. The soil that bore such a son cannot become sterile. The bronze of that blessed and blessing memory can never tarnish, nor that granite equity fall.

"So, (wrote Curtis, in 1865) came the May, softly gliding over grieving hearts and with her royal touch healing all our varied sorrows,—came the Queen for whom the people sighed and the land yearned,—came the well-beloved, the long-desired, palms in her hands and doves flying before her, and the name of that May-day Queen was PEACE!" But upon him, whose dauntless conviction had untangled the skein, who under God had pacified the land, a heavenlier light had broken!

Inveterate man! Great immortal! Out of the dusty years, we too salute thee! Not as at Bloomington, with that fearless challenge to the future; not uttering those two sublime inaugurals; nor there, nor there:—but in that hospital, bending to hold the hand of that dying soldier, in a mother's place! Oh, benign story! Unreproachful and unrepachable thy patience and thy fame!

If ever, girt by alien foes or threatened by mad hands from within, this Nation, so highly dedicated, shall again have the endurance of its liberties tested; if ever we are summoned to rally to the death about that constellation which Lincoln kept unshredded; the old organ tone will swell once more into 'the full chords of devotion' and upon every wind will flow the deep bourdon of answer,—“WE ARE COMING, FATHER ABRAHAM!”

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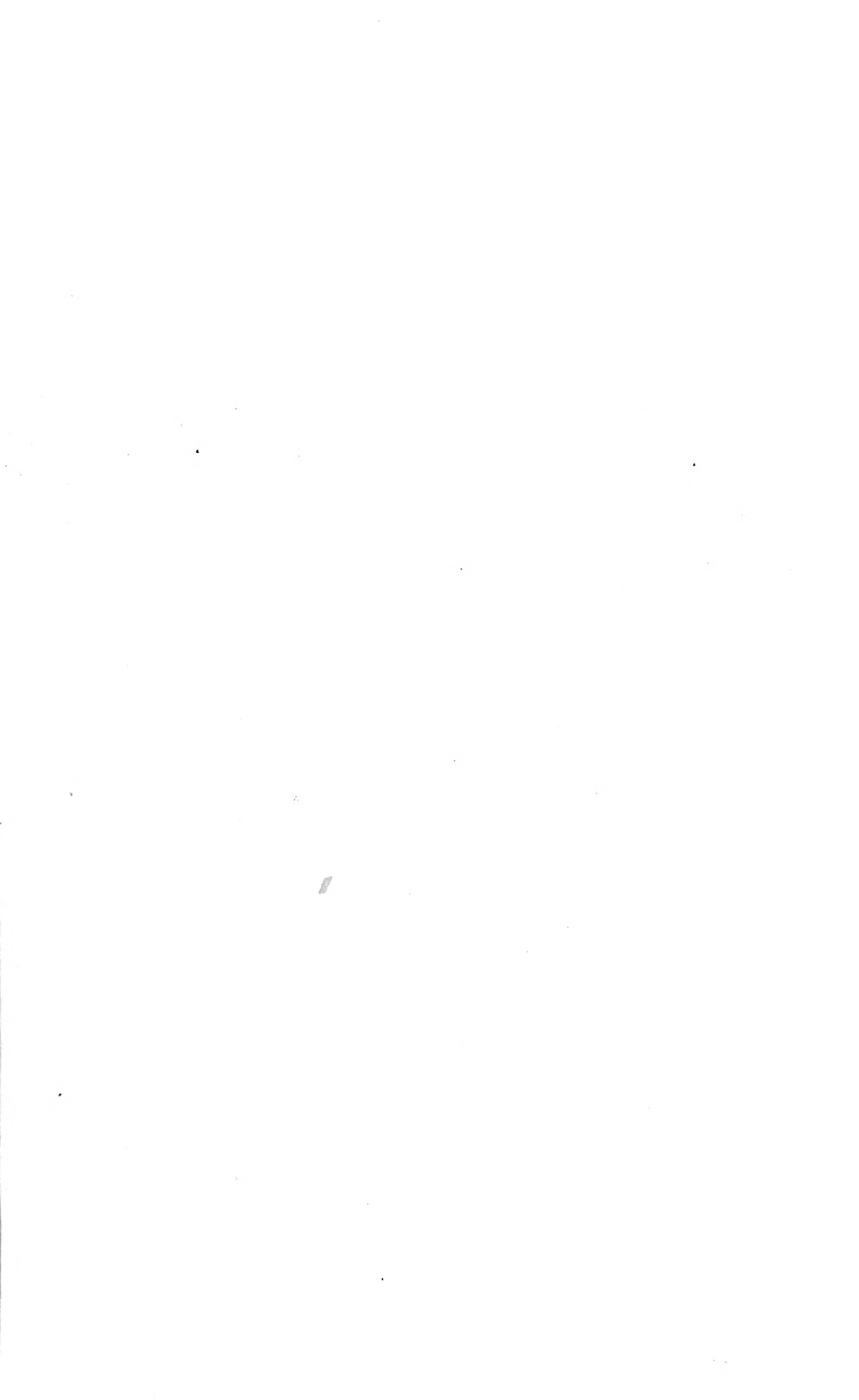
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